The Quran and Arab Punctuation Marks

Amr Abdelraouf

Introduction

The Arabs have lost much of their knowledge that they no longer know anything about, a fact that is well documented with numerous examples. One such example is the disconnected letters (al-huruf al-muqatta'ah) found in the Quranic text. To this day, Muslims fall into contradiction when interpreting these letters by describing them as divine secrets. The strongest evidence that these disconnected letters were not considered secrets at the time of the Quranic revelation is the absence of any questions from the Prophet's community to Prophet Muhammad about these letters, while the Quranic text itself documents other questions directed to the Prophet by his community, such as inquiries about mountains and new moons[1]. Had these disconnected letters been unknown to the Arabs intuitively at that time, they would have taken priority in requesting clarification and explanation for something completely ambiguous in a text that describes itself as being in a clear Arabic tongue[2]. This did not occur. Therefore, we maintain that the disconnected letters at the time of the Quranic revelation were indeed part of the Arabic language and were intuitively understood without any ambiguity but were subsequently lost among the Arab sciences that fell into oblivion.

Indeed, we find that this loss of knowledge is documented by the Islamic tradition itself in what was narrated by Ibn Majah and Al-Daraqutni from Abu Hurayrah: "Learn the laws of inheritance and teach them to people, for it is half of knowledge, and it will be forgotten, and it is the first thing that will be taken away from my nation."[3] This serves as evidence from the tradition that certain sciences would be forgotten, specifically the laws of inheritance, which comprise mathematical science. Thus, Islam does not reject the principle that some knowledge would be lost after the advent of Islam.

Research Question, Hypothesis, and Methodology:

This research aims to determine the nature of the disconnected letters at the beginnings of chapters in the Quranic text, which remain obscure or unclear to the present day. Therefore, the fundamental question of this research is: What are the disconnected letters at the beginnings of chapters in the Quranic text؟

To answer the research question, we have formulated the hypothesis that the disconnected letters are Arabic markers that were well known to the Arabs at the time of the Quranic revelation, and that they functioned as punctuation marks in pre-Islamic Arab writing, serving to mark the revelation sequence of verses, which were revealed gradually and separately.

1: Surah Taha 20:105, Surah Al-Baqarah 2:189

2: Surah Az-Zukhruf 43:3 " we have made it a Qur'an in Arabic, that you may be able to understand"

3: Sunan Ibn Majah, hadith number (2719); also narrated by Al-Daraqutni in Al-Sunan (4⁄67), Al-Hakim in Al-Mustadrak (4⁄332), and Al-Bayhaqi in Al-Sunan Al-Kubra

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The problem of this research is divided into two parts: studying and analyzing the disconnected letters in light of the explanations provided by Muslim interpreters, then critiquing what they have explained and the extent of its contradiction with the Quranic text itself, followed by establishing the connection between the disconnected letters and punctuation marks among the Arabs before Islam. This approach supports the research hypothesis that the disconnected letters are punctuation marks for the Quranic text.

At the beginning of this research, we will present the conclusions reached by Muslim scholars in their interpretation of the disconnected letters, then discuss these statements. At the end of the research, we present what we consider to be the true nature of these disconnected letters through the material historical context of Arab writings before and after the revelation of the Quran. In the conclusion of this research, we mention our findings regarding the true meaning of these letters under investigation.

The Disconnected Letters

The disconnected letters appeared at the beginning of some chapters in the Quranic text, and there are indications that even the chapters that do not begin with disconnected letters originally began with them but were forgotten or lost. This can be inferred from Al-Suyuti's statement: "I say: The reason for placing the seven Ha-Mims after Surah Al-Zumar is the similarity of their openings in beginning with the revelation of the Book. In the manuscript of Ubayy ibn Ka'b, the beginning of Al-Zumar was (Ha Mim)"[1]. However, in the current manuscript we have, Al-Zumar does not begin with (Ha Mim).

These are called the disconnected letters and the (Nuraniyah) luminous letters, and they are also called chapter openings. Ibn Mas'ud called them the brocade of the Quran, saying: "Al Ha mim "Al-Hawamim" dibaj al-Quran", "The Ha Mims are the brocade of the Quran.[2]"

They consist of fourteen letters, some repeated (ص Sad, ـلـ Lam, ـحـ Ha, ـسـ Sin, ـهـ Ha, ـيـ Ya, ر Ra, ا Alif, ـمـ Mim, ن Noon, ق Qaf, ـطـ Ta, ـعـ Ayn, ـكـ Kaf), and they appear at the beginnings of twenty-nine chapters as follows:

1: Al-Suyuti, Asrar Tartib al-Quran, Dar al-I'tisam 1978, p. 129

2: Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Surah Ghafir

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الٓمٓ **Alif Lam Mim**: Al-Baqarah, Al Imran, Al-Ankabut, Al-Rum, Luqman, Al-Sajdah

الٓمٓصٓ **Alif Lam Mim Sad**: Al-A'raf

الٓرٰ **Alif Lam Ra**: Yunus, Hud, Yusuf, Ibrahim, Al-Hijr

الٓمٓرٰ **Alif Lam Mim Ra**: Al-Ra'd

كٓهٰيٰعٓصٓ **Kaf Ha Ya Ayn Sad**: Maryam

طٰهٰ **Ta Ha**: Ta Ha

طٰسٓمٓ **Ta Sin Mim**: Al-Shu'ara, Al-Qasas

طٰسٓ **Ta Sin**: Al-Naml

يٰسٓ **Ya Sin**: Ya Sin

صٓ **Sad**: Sad

حٰمٓ **Ha Mim**: Ghafir, Fussilat, Al-Zukhruf, Al-Dukhan, Al-Jathiyah, Al-Ahqaf

حٰمٓعٓسٓقٓ **Ha Mim Ayn Sin Qaf**: Al-Shura

قٓ **Qaf**: Qaf

نٓ **Nun**: Al-Qalam

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A. The Statements of Muslim Scholars on the Disconnected Letters

Muslim scholars have differed regarding the nature of these disconnected letters that begin some chapters of the Quranic text. Some endeavored to interpret them, taking various approaches without reaching a consensus. Others relegated their knowledge to Allah.

A-A. The Statement of Those Who Relegated Them to God Among Muslim Scholars

Many Muslim scholars have stated that these letters at the beginnings of chapters have a divine secret known only to Allah, and they did not interpret them[1]. Among these is the statement of Al-Sa'di in his Tafsir: "As for the disconnected letters at the beginnings of chapters, it is safer to refrain from addressing their meaning without scriptural support (religious-legal basis), while firmly believing that Allah Almighty did not reveal them in vain, but for a hikmah (wise purpose) we do not know.[2]"

A-B. The Statement of Those Who Interpreted Them Among Muslim Scholars

Muslim scholars have differed vastly in their interpretation of these letters, both in ancient and modern times, over the course of more than a thousand years, in exhausting attempts taking them east and west without any consensus on their nature, though agreeing that they are disputed.

Therefore, to review these interpretations, we should refer to the most recent major Muslim scholars who summarized these interpretations to ensure that their knowledge encompassed everything said about them, both ancient and modern. Thus, we review the summary statement of Al-Uthaymin in his interpretation of Surah Al-Baqarah, where he said: "These alphabetic letters have been subject to scholarly disagreement, and regarding the wise rationale for them, there are many opinions that can be limited to four statements:

The First Statement:

That they have a meaning, and the proponents of this statement differed in determining it: whether it is the name of Allah Almighty, the name of the chapter, an indication of the duration of the nation, or something similar.

The Second Statement:

They are alphabetic letters with absolutely no meaning.

1: Tafsir Al-Qurtubi 1/154

2: Taysir al-Karim al-Rahman fi Tafsir Kalam al-Mannan 1/40

The Third Statement:

They have a meaning that Allah knows best. We affirm that they have a meaning, but Allah knows best what it is, because they say that the Quran cannot be revealed except with meaning.

The Fourth Statement:

To withhold judgment and not exceed their recitation, and say: Allah knows best whether they have a meaning or not. And if they have a meaning, we do not know what it is.

The most correct of these statements is the second, which is that they are alphabetic letters with absolutely no meaning, and this is narrated from Mujahid. The evidence for this statement is that the Quran was revealed in the language of the Arabs, and these letters have no meaning in the Arabic language, just as you say: Alif, Ba, Ta, Tha, Jim, Ha; they are likewise alphabetic letters.[1]"

B. Discussion of the Statements of Muslim Scholars

B-A. The Statement of Those Who Relegated Them to God

The statement that the disconnected letters at the beginnings of chapters have a divine secret that we do not know and that only Allah knows is a statement that contradicts the Quran's own assertion itself. The verses in the Quran are clear and categorical that it was revealed in the Arabic tongue and that it is highly explanatory, as in the verse: "Indeed, We have sent it down as an Arabic Quran that you might understand"[2]. Moreover, it establishes its Arabic nature as proof for understanding what was revealed, so it is absolutely impermissible to say that they are letters with secrets that cannot be understood by those to whom the Quran was revealed. This is what prompted some other Muslim scholars to make efforts in attempting interpretation.

B-B. The Statement of Those Who Said They Have an Interpretation

The Quranic text states: "And We have certainly made the Quran easy for remembrance, so is there any who will remember?"[3]. also describes itself as being in a clear Arabic tongue, This means that Allah has made it easy for people to read and well understand the Quran and made what is in it easy as an argument against people, therefore He establishes proof against them and holds them accountable; so is there any who will remember? And well understand? Therefore, any interpretation that is not simple for the mind to understand intuitively is a rejected interpretation

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1: Tafsir al-Quran by Al-Uthaymin 3/3

2: Surah Yusuf 12:2

3: Surah Al-Qamar 54:17

because it conflicts with the verses that confirm the ease of the Quran for remembrance and well understanding. This includes Al-Uthaymin's first statement that they are the name of God Almighty, the name of the chapter, an indication of the duration of the nation, or similar such ambiguous matters. Where is the ease for remembrance and contemplation, for example, in a chapter whose name is not understood?! The believer becomes confused at the key to understanding the Quranic text, which is the name of the text itself.

Al-Uthaymin's second statement is rejected for the same reason as well, the contradiction with the verses of ease for remembrance, as they cannot be meaningless. And Al-Uthaymin's fourth statement is definitely rejected, as it is not permissible to withhold understanding them and merely suffice with their recitation, otherwise where is the command "so is there any who will remember/well understand"؟

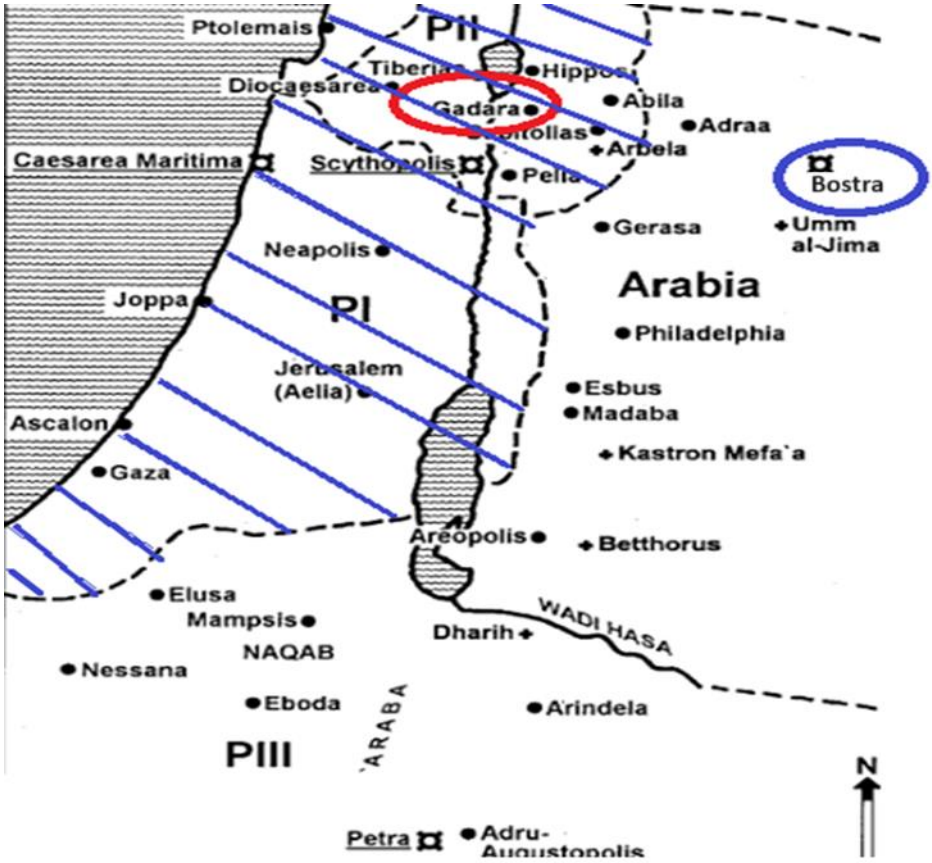
Therefore, Al-Uthaymin's third statement remains consistent with the verses concerning the Arabic nature of the Quran for understanding and Allah's facilitation of the Quran for remembrance without obstacles that confuse and distract the human mind from the intended meaning. He stated that it is the most correct statement by affirming that they have a meaning, but Allah knows best what it is, because they say that the Quran cannot be revealed except with meaning. Al-Uthaymin only failed to mention the affirmation that they had a facilitated and intuitive meaning at the time of the Quran's revelation, because they say that the Quran cannot be revealed except with meaning. This statement of theirs refers to the time of the Quran's revelation, but now the meaning has been forgotten, and this is what the Quranic verses accept when they were revealed speaking about the Arabic nature of the Quran for its understanding and the facilitation of the Quran for remembrance. Logic also accepts only that they had a facilitated meaning that was necessarily known and intuitive to the minds of the Arabs at the time of their revelation, otherwise they would have been the first priority for Arab inquiry if they had been otherwise, as the Quran documented their questions about new moons and mountains, and it would have been more appropriate for them to ask about the beginnings of chapters if they had no meaning for them. Indeed, the absence of any mention in the Quran of Arab inquiry about these letters at the beginnings of chapters is itself sufficient proof that they were necessarily known and intuitive to them upon hearing them, to the degree that there was no need to ask about them.

C. The Historical Context of the Disconnected Letters

By studying the writings of the Arabs before and after the revelation of the Quran to discover what was meant in their Arabic language when they wrote disconnected letters in that form, we find that there were punctuation marks among the Arabs that they inscribed in their various writings to indicate numbers, derived from their own

letters. In this, they were like the surrounding cultures that used letters as punctuation marks.

This is what pre-Islamic Arabic inscriptions have indeed proven. By reviewing the Arabic inscriptions before Islam located in the area of the Provincia Arabia, which was established on March 22, 106 CE, and their adoption of Bosra as the capital, which was the beginning of the calendar that the Arabs adopted until Islam came[1][2][3][4][5], we discover by reviewing these inscriptions that there is a science that the Arabs lost after Islam, which is their own punctuation marks.



The borders of Provincia Arabia from the north with the Roman colonial province

1: MacAdam 1986:P 34.
2: Frank R. Demographic and cultural transition in the territorium of Antioch, 6th-10th.P 345:"the Provincia Arabia which began on 22 March"
3: CRAI 2014, III (juillet-octobre),p 1092:"le début de l'année se situe bien vers l'équinoxe vernal, burak correspond à février-mars"

4: Grumel 1958:P 173.
5: A New Greek funerary Inscription from be'er sheva YuliaUstinovaand Pau Figueras, P 168:"The year began simultaneously with that of Provincia Arabia, that is, on the vernal equinox, 22March"

The inscriptions inform us of their punctuation marks with which they dated those inscriptions. We find that they used the same method as the various surrounding cultures at that time and were influenced by those cultures, which is the use of letters as punctuation marks for numbers. This is what the Greeks, Romans, Syrians, Armenians, and all those surrounding the Arabs used.

Alpha	Beta	Gamma	Delta	Epsilon	Zeta	Eta	Theta
Α α	Β β	Γ γ	Δ δ	Ε ε	Ζ ζ	Η η	Θ θ
1	2	3	4	5	7	8	9

Iota	Kappa	Lamda	Mu	Nu	Xi	Omicron	Pi
Ι ι	Κ κ	Λ λ	Μ μ	Ν ν	Ξ ξ	Ο ο	Π π
10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80

Rho	Sigma	Tau	Upsilon	Phi	Chi	Psi	Omega
Ρ ρ	Σ σ ς	Τ τ	Υ υ	Φ φ	Χ χ	Ψ ψ	Ω ω
100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800

Digamma	Stigma	Koppa	Sampi
F	ϛ	ϙ	ϡ
6	6	90	900

Punctuation marks among the Greeks in Greek letters

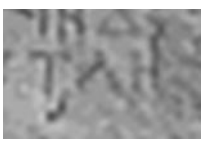
Tombstone Inscription of Sa'd Allah:

This is an inscription located in the Negev Desert in Greek language influenced by the occupier and his culture, dated by the first indiction, year 338[1].

+ ΑΝΕΠΑΕ
ΩΜϚCΑΑΔΑΛΑC
ΕΝΜΗΝΙCΟΥΒΑΤ Ε
ΤΗC ΙΝΔϚ Α +
ΕΤϚΤΑΗ

Ἀνεπάε
ὠ μ(ακάριος) Σααδάλας
ἐν μενὶ Σουβατ ε΄
τῆς ἰνδ(ικτιῶνος) α΄
ἔτ(ους) τλη΄

Transcription of the Sa'd Allah inscription: The circle on the first indiction and the rectangle on the word Saadallah



Punctuation marks in Greek letters as they appear in the inscription: 338

1: A New Greek funerary Inscription from be'er sheva YuliaUstinovaand Pau Figueras, p167.

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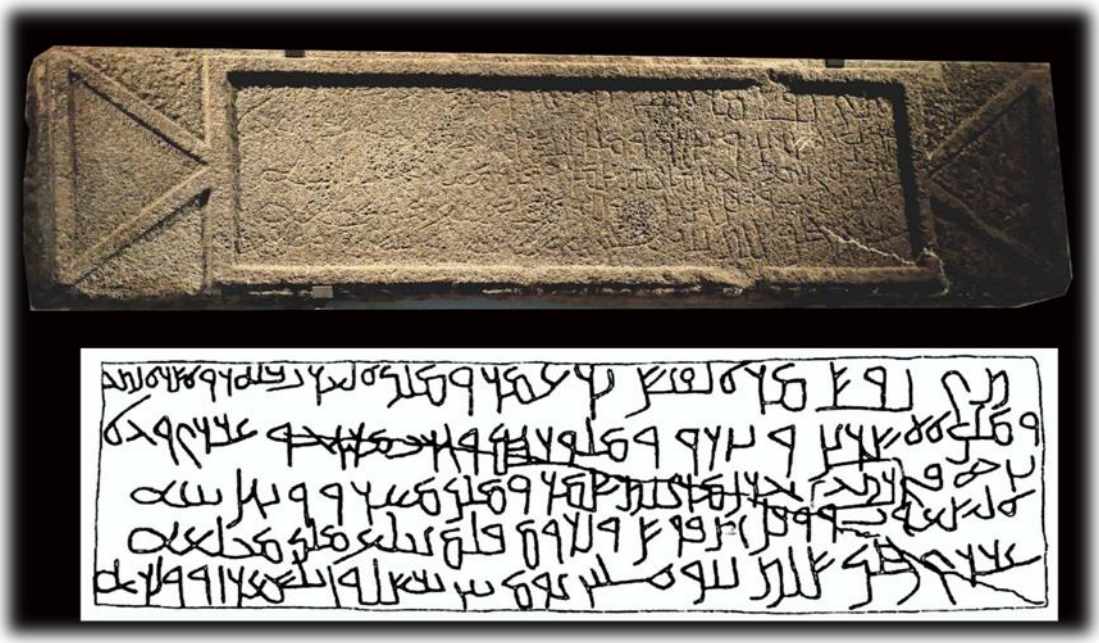
C-A. Arab Writings Before Islam

- Namara Inscription:

This is the tombstone of Imru' al-Qays ibn Amr, king of the Arabs, in Namara in Hauran, and the inscription is dated to the month of Kaslul in the year 223 by the Provincia Arabia calendar, the Bosra calendar, corresponding to the year 328 CE[1], and many of its words, perhaps all of them, have a form that closely resembles the form of Islamic Arabic script[2]. Its writing is recorded in the Northern Arabic dialect close to the dialect of the Quran, although written in the late Nabataean script and in a style influenced by Aramaic[3].



Transcription of the Namara inscription

1: Macdonald's (2015: 405–9), IN THE NAMĀRAH INSCRIPTION AND A NEW INTERPRETATION OF LINE 4,P 370. doi: 10.1093/jss/fgab004 :"in the year 223 on the 3rd day of Kaslūl"

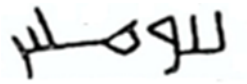
2: Sources of Pre-Islamic Poetry, Nasir al-Din al-Asad, p. 27

3: Al-Mufassal, Jawad Ali, Vol. 15, p. 176

The inscription states:

"This is the grave of Imru' al-Qays ibn Amr, king of all the Arabs, who obtained the crown and ruled over the two Asads and Nizar and their kings, and defeated Madhhij with his might and led victory to the walls of Najran..."

This means that the vast kingdom of Imru' al-Qays ibn Amr, king of all Provincia Arabia, extended to Najran in southern Arabia, passing through the Hijaz. This is what we will indeed find from inscriptions in southern Arabia in Najran, where the same Provincia Arabia calendar is used with the same punctuation marks.



Dating of the inscription with Arab punctuation marks, which is 223

- UJadh 109 Inscription:

This is an inscription in northwestern Arabia (Darb al-Baqarah) dated to the year 350 by the Arab calendar of Provincia Arabia/Bosra, corresponding to 455 CE. The inscription states after the date: "when they brought in Amr the king."[1]

FIGURE 38. *UJadh 109. (Photograph al-Theeb 2002: 311, facsimile L. Nehmé).*

bly dkyr phmw br
ʿbydw šlm šnt 2 × 100
+ 100 + 20 + 20 + 10 ʾdḥlw
ʿmrw
ʾlmlk
"Yea, may Phmw son of ʿbydw be remembered [and] may he be secure, year 350 [when] they introduced ʿmrw [ʿAmrū] the king"

Transcription of UJadh 109 inscription" "Dating of the inscription: (year) 350

1: Laïla Nehmé - Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies, Vol. 40, Papers from the Special Session of the Seminar for Arabian Studies held on 24 July, 2009 (2010),P 76.

- Thawban Inscription:

This is an inscription in the Hima area in Najran in southern Saudi Arabia dated to the year 364 by the Arab calendar in the month of Burak, corresponding to the year 470 CE. The text of the inscription reads: "Law son of Malku, month of Burak, year 364."[1] [2] [3] Another inscription in Najran is also dated to the month of Al-Mu'tamir, year 408 by the Arab calendar, corresponding to the year 513 CE.[4]

FIG. 11. – Ḥimà-Sud PalAr 1.
Photographie MAFSN.

Thawban inscription in Najran, south of the Hijaz" "The date: (year) 364

1: Zakaria Muhammed, There is no word 'Thawban' in Hima- Najran inscriptions- P5.

2: Robin, C.J., A. al-Ghabban, and S.F al-sa'id(2014).

3: CRAI 2014, III (juillet-octobre) nouveaux jalons pour l'histoire de l'écriture, de la langue et du calendrier arabes,p. 1088 :"de l'an 364 de l'ère de la province d'Arabie, qui correspond probablement à février-mars 470 de l'ère chrétienne. On peut supposer que cette date est celle de la mort du personnage commémoré. Graphie: l'alphabet nabaṭéo-arabe se présente ici sous une forme très semblable à celle de l'arabe préislamique"

4: Previous Reference,p. 1048 :" «Thawbān (fils de) Mālik (2) Au mois de burak (3) de l'an 364 » Si le calendrier al-muʾtamir–burak a idéalement son inception à l'équinoxe de printemps, il en résulte que le premier mois de l'année, al-muʾtamir, correspond au mois de mars-avril du calendrier julien ; quant au dernier, burak, c'est février-mars. Les deux inscriptions datées de Ḥimà Sud remonteraient donc à février-mars 470 et à mars-avril 513. Les Arabes de la région"

- Salma Inscription:

This is an inscription found at Dawmat al-Jandal dated to the year 443 by the Arab calendar [1] [2], corresponding to the year 548 CE.

Figure 6: Close-up of DaJ144PAr1 (G. Charloux).

Figure 7: Facsimile of DaJ144PAr1 (L. Nehmé).

Transcription of the Salma inscription

Dating with sanat (year) 443 using punctuation marks in disconnected letters

1: CNRS, Orient & Méditerranée-Arabian Epigraphic Notes 3 (2017): Published online: 27 October. P. 128 :"new dated inscriptions from a site near ancient dūmah "May be remembered. May God remember Ḥgʿ{b/n}w son of Salama/Salāma/Salima {in} the m[onth] (gap) year 443. (ad 548/549)". http://hdl.handle.net/1887/54231

2: Previous Reference. P.129 :"The reading of the date is clear. It is written in the way that one would expect, i.e. 4×100 followed by 20+20+3. That is year 443 of what can only be the era of the Roman province of Arabia"

- Harran al-Laja Inscription:

This is an inscription found in northern Arabia north of the city of Bosra in Greek and clear, understandable Arabic writing above the door of a church belonging to its owner Sharahil ibn Zalim, dated in Greek to the year 463 by the Arab calendar, corresponding to 568 CE[1]. As for the Arabic text, it is also dated to the year 463, and the Arabic inscription text reads: "I, Sharahil son of Zalmu, built this sanctuary in the year 463, one year after the corruption of Khaybar."

1) *'n' šrḥyl bn/br ṭlmw bnyt d' 'lmrṭwl*
2) *snt 463 b'd mfsd* (?)
3) *ḫybr/ḥnyn(?) b'm*
1) Σαραηλος Ταλεμου
2) φυλαρχ[ο]ς εκτισεν το μαρτ[υριον]
3) του αγιου Ιωαννου ινδ[ικτιωνος] Α του ετους ΥΞΓ. Μνησθιε ο γραψας

Harran al-Laja inscription

Dating using punctuation marks in disconnected letters with (year) 463

1: CRAI 2014, III (juillet-octobre), p. 1045 :" à Ḥarrān dans le Lajā, au sud de Damas (463 de l'ère de la province d'Arabie et an 1 del'indiction, soit – estime-t-on – entre le 22 mars et le 31 août 568de l'ère chrétienne)"

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The punctuation marks with disconnected letters that the Arabs used to number their calendar in their inscriptions before Islam can be simplified in the following explanation[2]:

punctuation mark with the letter Alif in ancient Arabic (ا) = 1

punctuation mark with the letter Ba at the beginning of the word in ancient Arabic (بـ) =2

punctuation mark with the letter Sin at the beginning of the word in ancient Arabic (ببـ) =3

punctuation mark with the letter Ha in the middle of the word in ancient Arabic ( ) = 4

punctuation mark with the letter Ya at the end of the word in ancient Arabic ( ) = 10

punctuation mark with the letter Ta in ancient Arabic (ط) = 20

punctuation mark with the letter Waw in ancient Arabic (و) = 100

punctuation mark with the letter Kaf at the end of the word in ancient Arabic (S) = 500

- Example (1): Punctuation marks in the Harran al-Laja inscription:

sanat (year)

100 x 4 = 400, (ططط) 20+20+20+3 =63, meaning sanat (year) 463

2: For more information, see the book (Nabataean Inscriptions in the Arabian Peninsula, Dr. Amr al-Ghoul and Dr. Salah Said, Jordanian Ministry of Culture).

- Example (2): Punctuation marks in that Arabic inscription:

The first segment appears as (حـم Ha Mim) in traditional ancient Arabic script at the beginning of Islam, but it is not (Ha Mim) but rather ( ), meaning: 400. The second segment is (ط ١), meaning the date is: 421, which corresponds to the year 526 CE.

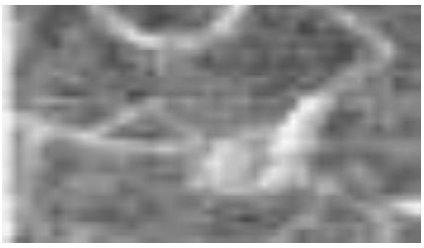
We find in their method that the punctuation marks are disconnected, where the marks indicating hundreds are intertwined in one segment, and the marks indicating ones and tens are intertwined in another segment.

Locations of inscription distribution in Provincia Arabia dated with the Arab calendar before Islam

C-B. Arab Writings After Islam

- Abu Bakr and Umar Inscription

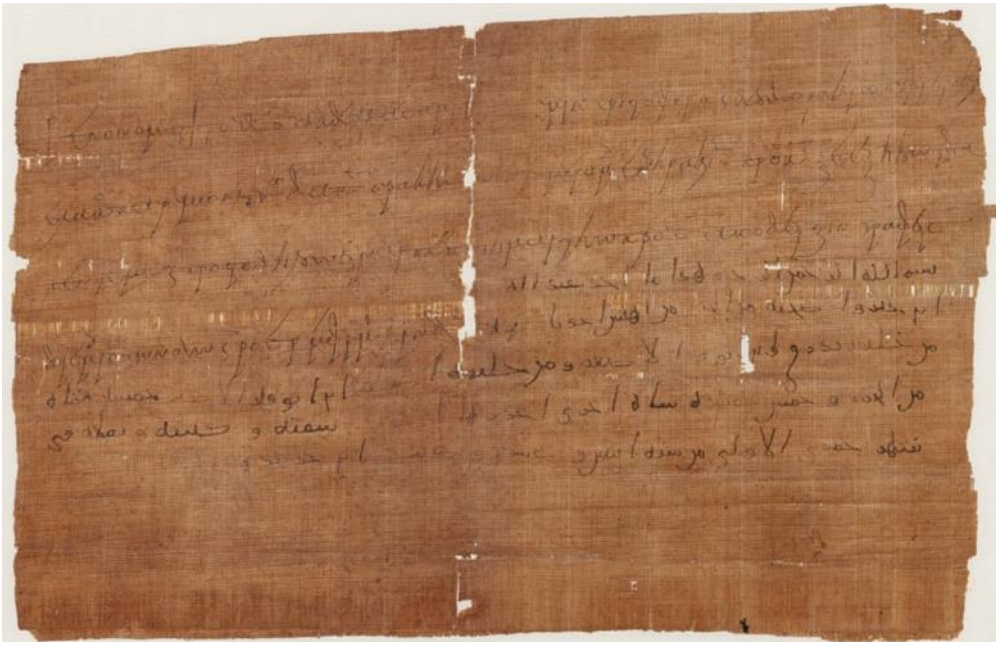
This is an inscription at Jabal Sal' in Saudi Arabia bearing the names Abu Bakr and Umar, dated to the year 521 by the Arab calendar[1], corresponding to the year 626 CE, which corresponds to the year 5 by the calendar that the Arabs adopted after Islam later. It is thus considered the oldest dated Islamic inscription, as it dates back to before the Arabs changed their method of punctuation marks.



Dating with 521 in the inscription using disconnected punctuation marks

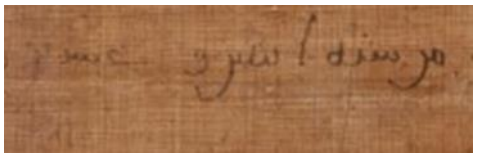
1: H. Hamidullan, Some Arabic Inscriptions of Medinah of the Early Years of Hijra, in Islamic Culture, vol 13, No. 4, 1939, p. 427.

- Ihnasya Document:



Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, P.Vindob. G 39726

(Grohmann, From the world of Arabic papyri, pp. 113–114) P.Vindob. G 39726



Dating written as: from year twenty-two

This is one of the oldest Arabic documents after Islam, dated to the year 22. In it and in all subsequent documents, we find two important new developments:

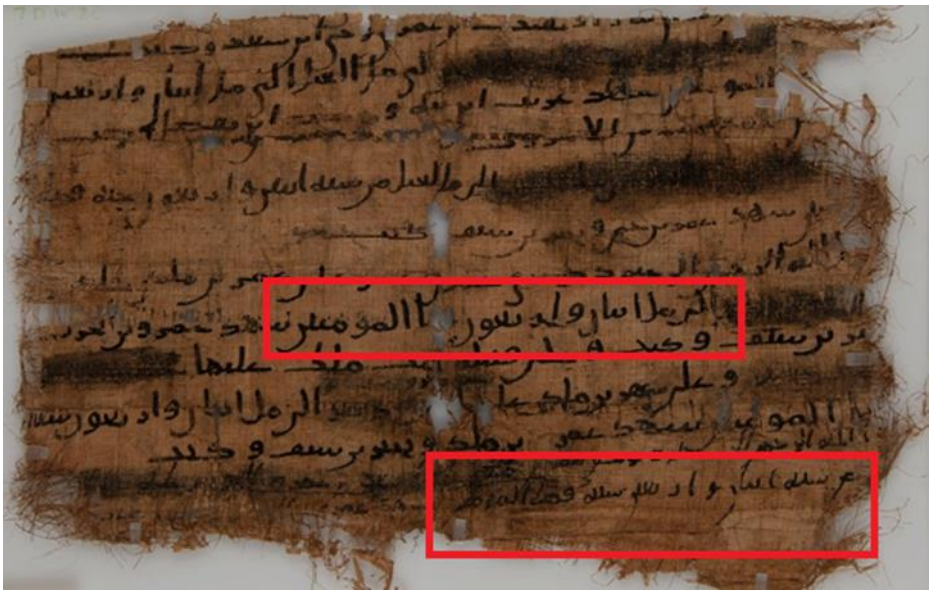
First:

We discover that the Arabs reset their own calendar and began counting a new one from the year 622 CE. As indicated in the documents, the name of this new calendar is (sanat qada' al-mu'minin - the year of the believers' judgment)[1].

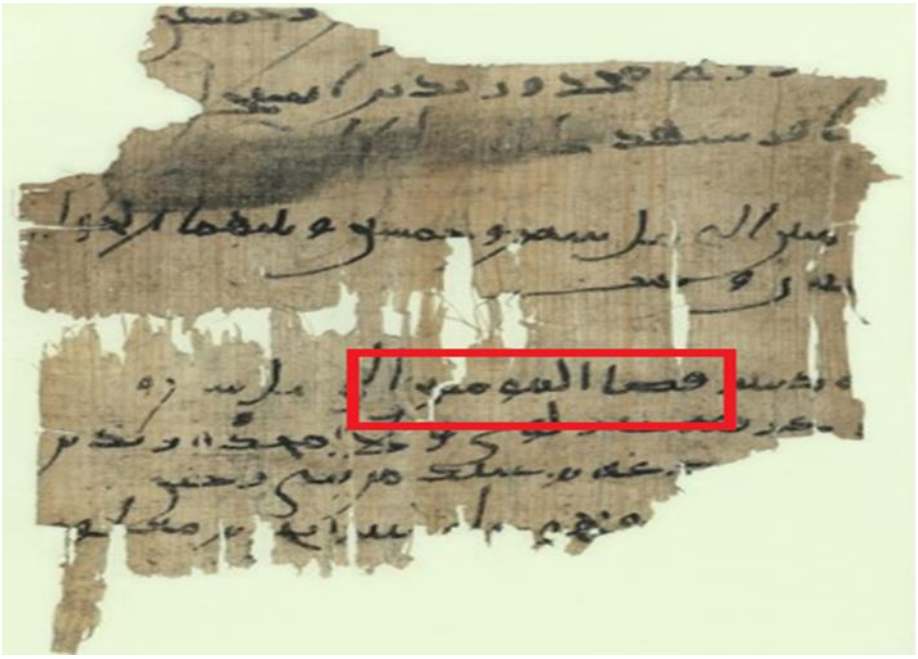
Second:

We discover that the Arabs changed their punctuation marks for numbers and began a new method, which is spelling out numbers in words, that is, writing the number in writing as the number is pronounced in Arabic, not merely punctuation marks with letters indicating the number.

1: It is abbreviated in some documents as (sanat - year), for example: from year forty-two sanat, meaning: from year 42 of the sanat/year of the believers' judgment. Sometimes it is abbreviated as (qada' al-mu'minin - believers' judgment), for example: from year forty-two believers' judgment, meaning: from year 42 of the year of the believers' judgment



Musée du Louvre. P. Louvre Inv. J. David-Weill20, year forty-two



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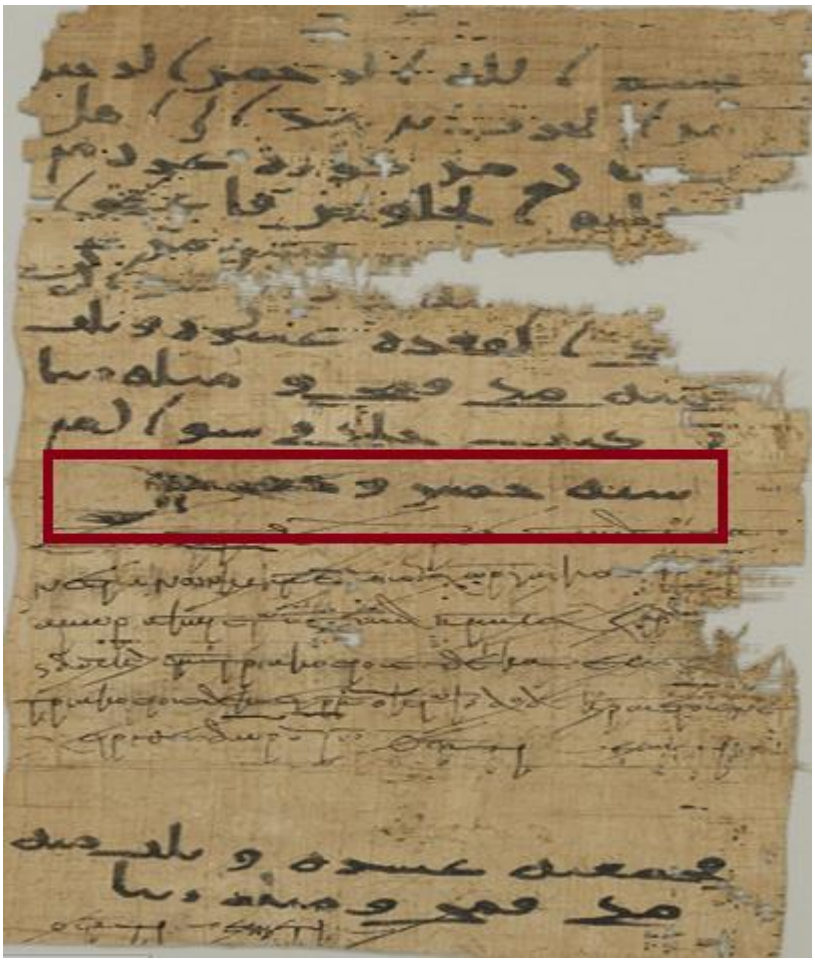

Photo courtesy of the Morgan Library and Museum, P.Nessana 62, year fifty-five.

What concerns us here in the research is the second new development, which is the change by all Arabs at once of the method of writing numbers from writing them with punctuation marks in disconnected letters to writing them spelled out as pronounced. There is no room for doubt that this was done by a decision made by the leader of the new Muslim state. As the documents inform us, this occurred between the writing of the Abu Bakr and Umar inscription dated by the Arab calendar in the old method with punctuation marks in the year 521 and the writing of the Ihnasya papyrus dated by the new method of spelling out numbers in the year 22, that is, between the year 5 and the year 22 of the year of the believers' judgment, which is the new calendar of the new Muslim state. This means that this decision was made between the year 626 and the year 643 CE, the period during which three rulers governed the new Islamic state (Prophet Muhammad, Abu Bakr, Umar). Whether this decision was made by the leader of the new Muslim state alone or was taken in a meeting of the major scholars ‘ulama’ of the new Muslim state, all documents prove that this decision was implemented extensively by all Arabs with everyone's compliance at once.

D. Conclusion:

In this research, we have presented the directions taken by the interpretations of Muslim scholars as they appeared in the Islamic tradition, and we have critically reviewed these interpretations and how they contradict the Quranic text itself. Then we studied the writings of the Arabs before and after Islam to arrive at what the disconnected letters meant to the Arabs at the time of the Quran's revelation and in what they used them, to understand what the Arabs understood when they heard those disconnected letters. We ultimately found material evidence of the first thing that would come to the mind of an Arab man in the Prophet's community when Muhammad presented them with the Quranic text beginning with disconnected letters. The first thing that would come to the minds of the Arabs at that time upon hearing those letters is that they were punctuation marks for the Quranic verses that were revealed gradually and separately, which they knew very well and very intuitively and which they used and inscribed with their own hands on stone inscriptions.

An Arab man in the Prophet's community asking Prophet Muhammad about the disconnected letters at the beginning of Quranic chapters (Alif Lam Mim / Sad / Noon / Ha Mim) is exactly like a man in our current era reading a book by an author and then asking the author what these marks are at the beginning of each page (1 / 2 / 3 / 4). Certainly, no man in our current era would ask about the punctuation marks at the beginnings of pages or paragraphs. Likewise, no man in the Prophet's community asked Prophet Muhammad about the disconnected letters at the beginnings of chapters.

From all the above material evidence, we understand when the Arabs stopped using these marks for their numerical system and replaced them with another, which occurred between the last inscription with the old system in year 5 and the papyrus with the new system in the year 22 of the new Arab calendar after Islam. This means the Arabs lost this particular science of punctuation marks at a very early stage of Islam, that is, during the period of the first three rulers of the new Islamic state (Prophet Muhammad, Abu Bakr, Umar). Whether this was by an individual decision from the ruler or by a meeting of the ruler with the major scholars of the state, the evidence is categorical that this decision was made by the senior leadership of the new state, as we find complete compliance by all Arabs at once in completely abandoning punctuation marks in all their writings and beginning a new era with the method of writing numbers at a very early stage of Islam. certainly after very few successive generations, these new generations and those after them would look at the Quranic text and those letters at their beginnings with wonder and in an attempt to understand an ancient science among the Arabs at the time of the Quran's revelation that then became abandoned and forgotten. After these punctuation marks in the form of letters had been a recognized and self-evident component of the Arabic linguistic tradition at the time of the Quranic revelation.